

APRIL 1968

CPYRIGHT

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00001R000400240008-0

CIA-04 Robbins Barbara A

TJS 7-05 Vietnam

TJS 7-05 Vietnam/HS



EVACUATING WOUNDED--U.S. Army and Navy personnel, Vietnamese civilians, and local police helped rescue the wounded. The American at left is unidentified. At the other end of the stretcher, center, is Doyle Oentry of the Embassy's Maintenance Section.

TERRORISTS BLAST CHANCERY AT SAIGON

CPYRIGHT

SAIGON NEAR mid-day on March 30th it was business as usual, or what equates to usual business in Saigon these days, in our Embassy's Chancery offices located in a five-story building bordering one of the busiest intersections in town. On the ground floor, in the consular section, FSO Thomas F. Wilson asked colleague FSO Edith Smith if the noises they were hearing were gunfire or an automobile backfiring.

The exchange of gunfire which the two consular officers heard and fleetingly observed before fortuitously withdrawing from the window preceded by seconds the detonation by Viet Cong terrorists of a 250-pound high explosive charge.

The explosion blasted a crater in the street four feet deep by six feet wide, sent searing flames 300 feet in the air, severely damaged the chancery and

killed 11 Vietnamese and two Americans and injured some one hundred more.

(Just prior to the explosion a Vietnamese national on a motor bike stopped in front of the U.S. Embassy at the intersection of Ham Nghi boulevard and Vo Di Ngu street. And within a short time a sedan with a single occupant pulled up.

(When the driver of the car was ordered to move on by a policeman, he opened fire. The policeman shot back. Joining in the exchange of bullets at close range, with a pistol, was the man on the motor bike.

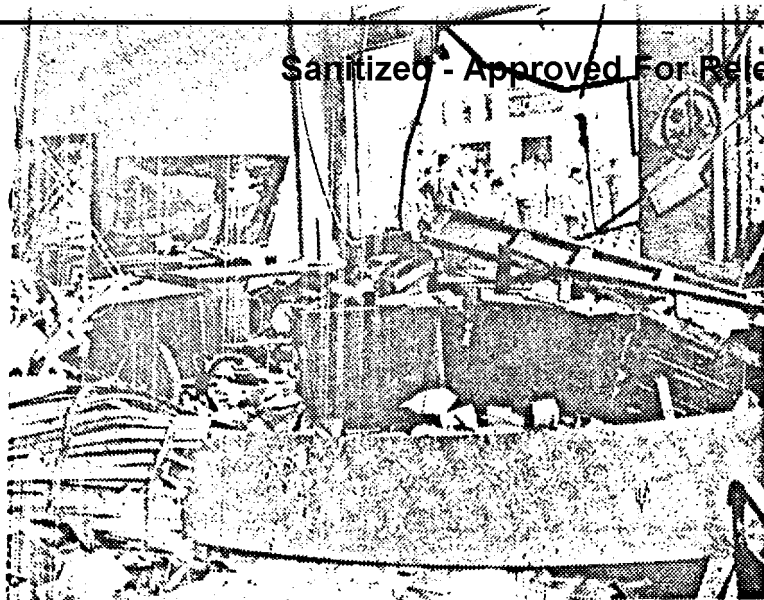
(Suddenly, the sedan exploded with a roar. The man in the sedan, which carried 200 to 250 pounds of dynamite or its equivalent, was disintegrated; so was the policeman who had challenged him. The man on the bike had tried to flee the scene seconds before the blast.

(The explosion, which was heard throughout downtown Saigon, left Embassy personnel determined in their intent to go about their work as best they could despite the trying conditions.)

VIVID press accounts described the scene. Said one report, "Amidst sirens, ambulance bells and fire engines, a crowd pushed toward the Embassy entrance. Two American girls, one dead, lay on stretchers in front of the Embassy. An American official, his suit covered with blood, lay unconscious on a third stretcher. Other Americans with bloody faces and arms were being helped into ambulances."

The American dead were Miss Barbara A. Robbins, Embassy secretary from Denver, Colorado, and United States Navy Petty Officer Manolo W. Castillo. Three of the

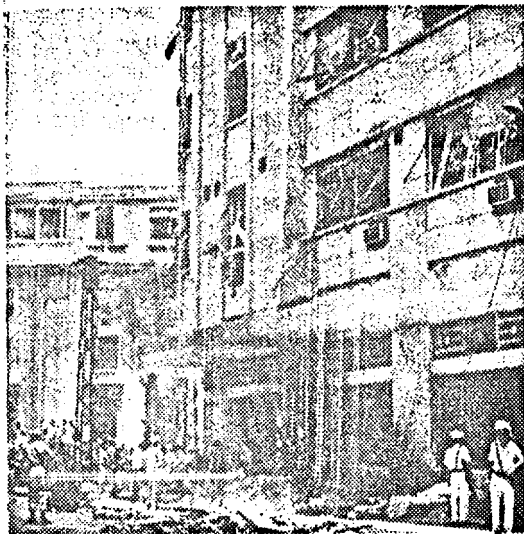
Continued



AFTER THE BLAST--This view from the Embassy lobby shows the Consulate section where two Vietnamese local employees lost their lives. The Consulate section, where no one escaped injury, is now back in business at a new location.



INJURED AMERICAN--Vice Consul Sam Thomson, normally stationed in Hue, was on temporary duty in Saigon at the time of the bombing. Here, the wounded Mr. Thomson is assisted by two Embassy secretaries, Mary K. McDonald and Eva Kim.



BOMB DAMAGE--This photo shows the damage done to the ground, first and second floors of the Chancery in the bombing on March 30.



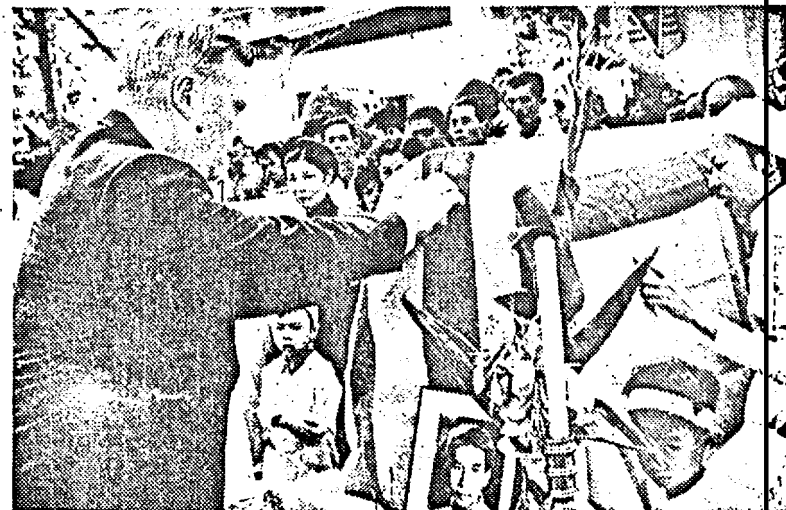
STILL SMILING--Vice Consul Edie Smith is shown in the hospital with the Thai nurse who is an employee of the American Embassy.



DISINTEGRATED CAR--The sedan which carried the 200 to 250 pounds of explosive material was blown into many pieces and bits.



REFLECTS CONCERN--Administrative Officer John Bacon, slightly injured, talks with Administrative Officer John Bacon.



AMBASSADOR JOHNSON--Ambassador Johnson on the coffin of a Vietnamese policeman who was killed.

Vietnamese, Mr. Tran Phu Tho, Miss Nguyen Thi Tham and Mr. Huynh Van Bam, were employees of the Embassy.

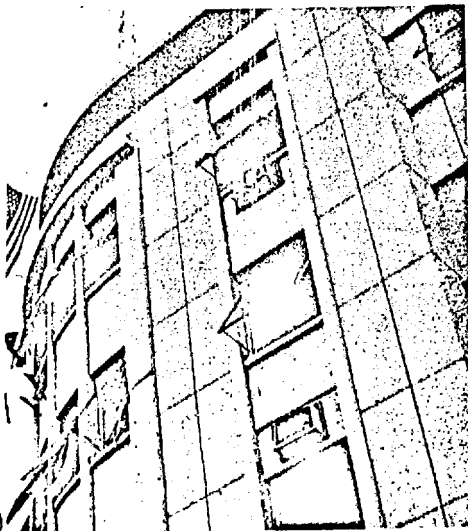
Eleven of the more seriously injured Americans were evacuated within hours to Clark Air Force Base in Manila for further treatment; others were hospitalized in Saigon; and many were treated for cuts and bruises.

The President and Secretary Rusk first heard of the atrocity the evening of March 29 while attending a state dinner honoring President Maurice Yameogo of Upper Volta.

President and Mrs. Johnson sent this telegram to Barbara's parents:

"Mrs. Johnson and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Barbara. With daughters of our own we know the extent of your grief. Barbara gave her life in the service of her country trying to protect the cherished ideals of our nation. We are all in her debt. Please accept our deepest sympathy."

IN another telegram Secretary and Mrs. Rusk said, "Barbara was a fine representative of her country and performed her duties with the greatest competence under the most difficult and trying circumstances. She was held in the highest esteem by her friends and associates in the Foreign Service, and I want you to know that our thoughts are very much with you during this sad time of personal tragedy and grief."



FLAG'S STILL THERE—The blast was so powerful that it broke the flagpole on top of the U.S. Embassy's six-story-high Chancery.

The terrorist outrage aimed at the American Embassy in Saigon shows us once again what the struggle in Viet-Nam is about.

This wanton act of ruthlessness has brought death and serious injury to innocent Vietnamese citizens in the street as well as to American and Vietnamese personnel on duty.

I extend my deepest sympathy to the families of all who lost their lives.

Outrages like this will only reinforce the determination of the American people and government to continue and to strengthen their assistance and

support for the people and government of Viet-Nam.

The embassy is already back in business and I shall at once request the Congress for authority and funds for the immediate construction of a new chancery for the American Embassy in Saigon. This will be one more symbol of our solidarity with the people of Viet-Nam. It is they who are the real targets of the communist aggressor.

Led by Ambassador Johnson, the Americans in Viet-Nam have once again shown outstanding qualities of courage and coolness. They have the admiration of their countrymen.

The Secretary's Award has been accorded Miss Robbins, Mr. Tran Phu Tho, Miss Nguyen Thi Tham and Mr. Huynh Van Bam. The Government of South Viet-Nam has awarded the highest civilian and military honors to Miss Robbins and Petty Officer Castillo.

Many acts of individual heroism are yet to be fully reported. Among these, according to the Embassy, is the outstanding performance and heroism of the Vietnamese police, four of whom were killed in the blast while attempting to prevent the terrorists' action.

The following morning Deputy Ambassador Johnson cabled the Department: "As a result of perfectly magnificent performance through night by Embassy maintenance staff we are back in Chancery this morning and operating normally with remaining personnel."

Donald Farley
Carlton Faler
Evelyn Flagg
Theodore Groll
David Henry
Ernest M. Howell
Charles F. Hudson
Alfred C. Johnson
U. Alexis Johnson
Harriet E. Keller
Yvonne Lajeunesse
Brenda Lee
Janet E. Lendall
Melvin H. Levine
Mary K. MacDonald
W. C. MacPherson
Melvin L. Manfull
Albert A. Marchant
Robert A. Meisinger

Sue Metras
Robert H. Miller
Harold E. Padgett
Dorothy R. Peters
Harry G. Peterson
John B. Riordan
James D. Rosenthal
Donald G. Scully
Gaynell Siefker
Edith Smith
Martin Sours
Peter Tarnoff
Jane Thompson
Samuel B. Thomsen
Herbert Weissart
Robert N. Weaver
Thomas F. Wilson
Helen Zuber

CASUALTY LIST

The following Americans were killed or injured in the terrorist bombing of the United States Embassy in Saigon.

DEAD

Manolito W. Castillo
Barbara A. Robbins

INJURED

George W. Allen
Florence Armstrong
William F. Beachner
Elizabeth Brook
Merlin G. Brooks
Evelyn Carnes
Robert L. Charlton
Thomas L. Cole
John P. Condon
Pearl Desilva
Rosemary Dunn
Frank Esquivel



KILLED—Barbara A. Robbins, 21, a secretary at the Embassy since last August, lost her life in the bombing. Miss Robbins was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. M. Robbins of Denver, Colo. Her funeral was held in Denver on April 3, when the Lutheran clergyman read telegrams of condolence from President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk.

3 Vietnamese Employees Killed In Amembassy Saigon Bombing

CPYRGHT

SAIGON

Three Vietnamese employees were killed when a bomb shattered the American Embassy on March 30.

They were:

—Tran Phu Tho, who had worked for the Embassy 15 years, and was the senior local employee in the Consular section. Like so many U.S. Foreign Service locals around the world, his knowledge and expertise in consular matters was of inestimable help to the Consular officer, and he will be—needless to say—very greatly missed.

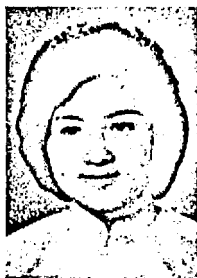


Mr. Tho

—Miss Nguyen Thi Tham, who was the secretary to the Consul. She was a dedicated, highly regarded employee who had been with the Embassy more than a year.

—Huynh Van Ban, who was known as "Speedy" and had driven for the Marine Security Guard Detachment

in Saigon for many years. Speedy lost his life because of one of his characteristics which lead to his nickname. Speedy was standing in the entrance of the Chancery—which proved to be a relatively safe area—when four shots were heard, immediately before the explosion. On hearing the shots, Speedy told the receptionist he had to get to the Marine house to pick up Marines whom he knew would be needed at the Chancery. He dashed out of the Embassy, thereby exposing himself to the blast which killed him. Had Speedy been less conscientious, it is probable he would be alive today.



Miss Tham



Mr. Ban

Volunteers Sought for Service In Provinces of Viet-Nam

The Department seeks volunteers at the FSO-3 and FSO-4 level as part of the expanded counter-insurgency effort in South Viet-Nam. They are needed to serve as AID Province Representatives in selected key provinces.

The AID Provincial Operations Program (See News Letter of June 1964) is a vital part of the overall American effort in Viet-Nam.

A Department Notice to all key personnel underscored that the President personally attaches the highest priority to that effort and to the Department's participation in it.

Volunteers for the Viet-Nam program will serve 18 months to two years. Broad experience and versatility of skills are important for the assignment. Officers volunteering should be proficient in French, and should be either single

or willing to serve without dependents. Those in the latter category will receive a separation allowance.

The AID Province Representative works with an American Military Advisor and the Vietnamese Province Chief in planning and directing the pacification of a province. The Provincial Operations Program plays a key role in the struggle of the Vietnamese people against Communist insurgency. The program is designed to meet the critical need for building cohesion in rural areas and promoting confidence in the Vietnamese government's ability to fulfill the basic aspirations of the countryside.

Interested officers should get in touch with PER/CMAD/FE, Room 7469, SA-8, Extension 6187. (Officers abroad should wire Personnel.)

House Acts Quickly

On Request for New Chancery at Saigon

The Administration moved swiftly to build a new chancery in Saigon within days of the bombing of the leased chancery property on March 29.

President Johnson directed the Department to proceed at once with the new chancery and sent to the Congress a bill providing a \$1 million authorization.

With unprecedented speed, the House Foreign Affairs Committee approved the Administration request in the form of a bill submitted by Representative Wayne Hays (D-Ohio) and the House itself unanimously passed the measure a few days later. As the News Letter went to press the bill was pending in the Senate.

Deputy Assistant Secretary James R. Johnstone, Director of Foreign Buildings Operations, sent Louis Del Favero, Assistant Director for Area Operations, Foreign Buildings Operations, to Saigon to explore construction possibilities.

It is proposed to construct new buildings to provide office space and supporting facilities on a U.S. Government-owned site approximately one mile north of the leased chancery which was bombed.

The building construction will be based on plans and specifications which have already been completed for this site.

Damage Reports Required

Spearheaded by FBO, the Department has issued a new section in the Foreign Affairs Manual concerning action to be taken by posts when property is damaged as a result of violent acts.

Prompted by an increasing number of demonstrations against Government premises which have suffered various degrees of damage, the new regulation requires specific reporting by Principal and Administrative Officers.